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**Peacebuilding Commission**
**First session**
**Central African Republic configuration**

**Summary record of the 1st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 November 2011, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson*: Mr. Grauls ..... (Belgium)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda** (PBC/5/CAF/2)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Adoption of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic** (PBC/5/CAF/L.1)

2. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic (PBC/5/CAF/L.1), which had been provisionally approved during informal consultations held on 13 September 2011. The document was the product of two parallel processes; one, taking place in New York, had concerned the commitments of the Peacebuilding Commission and the other, taking place in Bangui, had concerned the commitments of the Government of the Central African Republic and civil society. He took it that the members of the Central African Republic configuration wished to adopt the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic.

3. *It was so decided.*

4. **Mr. Doubane** (Central African Republic) congratulated the Commission on the quality of the review document and said that the fragility and vulnerability of the Central African Republic in the economic, political, and security areas resulted from its post-conflict situation. Concerning the recommendation contained in paragraph 38 (c) of the review document, he said that the Committee need not be concerned about the Government's fulfillment of the official commitments made in the Prime Minister's policy statement of 17 May 2011. The policy statement had been the watchword during the country's presidential elections and in the event that it was not implemented, a motion of no confidence offered the possibility for effective censure; the prospect of such a vote had led the previous Government, of which he had been a member, to resign.

5. In paragraph 38 (f), the Commission had recommended that the Government should use the funds received from the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC) to promote the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. He was uncertain as to the exact amount of the funds provided, which were administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In October 2011, the President of the Republic had stated that those funds had been turned over to him by his late predecessor and had enabled him to launch the process in question.

6. Paragraph 1 mentioned that significant funding had been provided by donors, including through the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. However, only 42 per cent of the promised funds had been received to date.

7. **Ms. Vogt** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic), speaking by videoconference from Bangui, said that a number of changes had resulted from the April 2011 visit by the Chairperson. On the political front, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), which she headed, had been stressing the importance of political engagement with the opposition in the context of reform of the electoral process. On the previous day, in a major breakthrough that she attributed to the Chairperson's visit, BINUCA had been approached by the Government with a request for assistance in launching an inclusive dialogue with the parties to the conflict, civil society, and community leaders before the end of November 2011 in order to discuss the electoral framework and institutions. The Government would work closely with BINUCA and its other partners in organizing the dialogue and had indicated that it would welcome the presence of members of the international community in an observer capacity.

8. The political climate remained relatively calm. Parliament was continuing its work effectively, notwithstanding its dominance by one party, and a number of ministers had been called before it to justify their actions.

9. The security situation remained relatively stable with the exception of some critical sectors. In the northwest, where disarmament had taken place, there was marked improvement; however, there was concern that the Government's inability to proceed immediately with reintegration might undermine the gains made. An increase in roadblocks manned by demobilized soldiers demanding money for passage made it urgent to speed up the reintegration process.

10. The situation in the central region remained tense and raised major security concerns. Serious shortfalls in the funding promised by the United Nations and the Government made it impossible to begin the disarmament process. The region was under frequent attack by General Baba Laddé's Front populaire pour le redressement (RPR), and other rebel groups had stated that they would not disarm until those attacks were brought to an end. The disarmament of foreign elements, which were infiltrating the country through its porous borders as a result of the recent events in Libya and other African countries, and the return of their members to their home countries were critical to the success of the pacification process. The problem was compounded by the fact that many of the Central African Republic's rebel groups had links with other countries. However, all of those groups had expressed a desire to enter into the disarmament and reintegration process; thus, the funding shortfall must be addressed as a matter of urgency so that that process could begin.

11. In the northern part of the country, a ceasefire agreement between th Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le changement (UFDR) had been signed in Bangui on 8 October 2011. The agreement called for the demilitarization of the town of Bria and the cessation of media campaigns. The leaders of the two groups had personally supervised the withdrawal of their forces from Bria in order to ensure that neither group laid an ambush for the other. A peace and reconciliation caravan composed of CPJP and UFDR officials, religious and community leaders and parliamentarians from the region had been launched in Bria on 14 November 2011 and was to visit the north-eastern cities of Birao, Sam Ouandja, Sikikede, Tiringoulou and Ndélé in order to show the inhabitants that the internal conflict was over and reconciliation had been achieved. It was necessary to follow up by establishing the verification commission and conciliation commission called for by the ceasefire agreement and to monitor developments in order to ensure that the belligerents did not re-arm and return to the area.

12. BINUCA was supporting national and international efforts to lessen the impact of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on the security situation in the country. A coordination cell had been established by BINUCA with the participation of France, the United States of America, the African Union and the Government in order to share information and strategies. The deployme· of United States military advisers had been well received, and BINUCA was working with them to determine how activities on the ground could be strengthened.

13. On 19 October 2011, an action plan for the release and reintegration of children formerly associated with the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la république de la démocratie (APRD) had been signed pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and to the recommendations of the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. It was hoped that a similar action plan would be signed with the CPJP on 22 November 2011.

14. The general human rights situation remained worrisome with acts of violence and extrajudicial executions perpetrated against civilians and rampant abuse, harassment, and extortion of the population. Since the Chairperson's visit, 24 detainees had been released from prison after lengthy pre-trial detention. BINUCA and the Ministry of Justice had agreed to meet monthly to review all cases of pre-trial detention, and BINUCA would be participating in the continuing education programs for law enforcement officers in Bangui offered by the Ministry of Justice. Efforts to negotiate the release of the blind prisoner to whom the Chairperson had drawn attention during his visit had not, as yet, achieved results. In a major economic development, the French company AREVA had temporarily suspended its Bakouma mine project for one to two years owing to a drop in the price of uranium. The project had been expected to generate over 1,000 direct and indirect jobs and its postponement had dealt a blow to the socio-economic situation.

15. The President had visited Nigeria on 8 November 2011 and had signed a new cooperation framework agreement. The Government had cooperated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation that was currently in the country and had also been actively engaged with the World Bank and other partners.

16. **Ms. Cheng-Hopkins**, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, said that the situation in the country was moving in the right direction, including through the signing of ceasefire agreements with the CPJP and progress in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. All the parties concerned were doing their best, but

apparently financial support and resources were not forthcoming.

17. The High-level Meeting on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, held in Kigali on 8 and 9 November 2011, had focused on the lessons to be learned from Rwanda's experience. Almost all the countries on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda had been represented. Lessons learned included the critical importance of leadership at all levels of government and civil society; the need for a serious focus on project implementation, using committees composed of donors and government representatives to address bottlenecks and monitor progress; and a near-obsession with transparency and the establishment of donor and government funds tracking systems in order to generate donor confidence. Those three factors were the essence of national ownership.

18. Rwandan President Kagame had stressed that many post-conflict countries were not poor in terms of natural resources; the problem was that their resources were not properly exploited or that the benefits thereof did not accrue to the population. One session of the annual high-level stakeholders meeting of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, to be held on 22 November 2011, would be devoted to natural resource development.

19. **Ms. Sutikno** (Indonesia) said that she welcomed the focus on reintegration strategy and on the future of disarmament and reintegration, including a social, economic, and community development strategy that provided legitimate and appealing income generation alternatives for former combatants.

20. She drew attention to the important role played by the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC), established in 1995 and headquartered since 2001 in Indonesia, as a provider of technical assistance and training programmes. In the future, it might be possible to explore possible training programmes for the Central African Republic in the areas of policy reform, in order to create the conditions for poverty eradication, and sustainable and equitable development, and to support the community-economy-based programme and the development of information and communication.

21. Working in partnership with other organizations and institutions, the Centre supported the members of the Non-Aligned Movement in matters of trade, intellectual property rights, microfinance, renewable energy, health, private-public partnerships and privatization. More than 1,600 persons had participated in over 60 programmes that it had conducted in various countries.

22. **Mr. Travers** (Canada) said that in light of the many challenges facing the Central African Republic, the progress in peacebuilding was commendable. He welcomed the analysis contained in the Strategic Framework review document (PBC/5/CAF/L.1) and particularly the recommendation, in paragraph 45 (a), that a refined long-term national security sector reform strategy should be developed. The Government's cooperation with the World Bank and the African Development Bank (ADB) was encouraging and should be designated a best practice. Aligning the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding with the Government's new poverty reduction strategy paper would reduce transaction costs.

23. Sustainable peace would remain elusive so long as the threats of violence and instability endured. It was therefore essential that the Government should finalize the ceasefire agreement with the CPJP and remain open to consultation with all political actors and civil society. His delegation welcomed the President's recent efforts to reach out to other countries in the region and remained committed to supporting the peacebuilding process in the country through participation in the Commission and contributions to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

24. **Mr. António** (African Union) said that since many African countries emerging from conflicts had valuable experiences to share, presentations showcasing effective government strategies, such as the one delivered by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, should become common practice. The statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of BINUCA had touched on many areas of importance to the African Union, including the slow pace of disarmament and reintegration, the need for concrete results and the consequences of the conflict in Libya for the Central African Republic and for the region as a whole. The Commission must remain aware of the regional impact of the LRA and promote partnerships on the ground in order to reduce that threat. Strengthening capacities in order to make security goals a reality must also be a top priority. He was pleased to note that the review document addressed all of those issues and wished to

stress that the Central African Republic configuration had a major role to play in achieving concrete results.

25. **Mr. Sánchez Rico** (European Union) said that his delegation had appreciated the opportunity to participate in the configuration's field visit to Bangui, which, together with the round table of partners of the Central African Republic held in June 2011, had helped consolidate the Government's commitment to specific reforms. The European Union stood ready to support the Government's implementation efforts; in particular, improving governance must be made a priority as a means of attracting new donors and reducing poverty.

26. With regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, while he welcomed the signing of the ceasefire agreement between rebel groups as a sign of progress, the establishment of a peace accord must remain the ultimate goal. The reintegration process should be viewed within the larger context of socio-economic development. Although the development hubs programme did not contain specific reintegration targets, the efforts to build the capacity of local authorities envisioned therein would make a significant contribution in that regard. He hoped that the upcoming meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Central African Republic, to be held on 14 December 2011, would help resolve some of the obstacles to peacebuilding in the country.

27. **Ms. Payne** (United Kingdom) said that the second biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic had revealed progress towards inclusive political dialogue. The challenges to reintegration and security sector reform extended beyond the shortfall in funding; there was also a need for a coherent strategy that the international community could use as a basis for support. Her delegation endorsed the proposal to align the country's poverty reduction strategy paper with the Strategic Framework and encouraged the Government to work with the Commission and BINUCA to ensure that the strategy paper focused on peacebuilding priorities and included benchmarks and a timeline for implementation. As the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support had noted, a clear strategy would increase donor confidence. She wondered what the Commission could do to support medium- and long-term peacebuilding strategies and ensure the involvement of civil society.

28. **Mr. Elkrekshi** (Libya) said that, owing to the recent turbulent events in his country, his delegation had not been playing an active role in the Commission; it now welcomed the opportunity to do so. Recalling that the situation in Libya had been evoked several times during the meeting, he paid tribute to the great sacrifice that his people had made in the effort to recover their freedom and build a democratic State. Libya faced many of the challenges that confronted other countries in the aftermath of conflict, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was coordinating international action and had found it difficult to oversee the peacebuilding process and prepare for elections; he hoped that it could benefit from the experience of other post-conflict countries. Libya's future political and economic stability, like that of other fragile countries, was a question not of resources but of political will at the national and international levels.

29. **Ms. Jaraud-Darnault** (France) said he was pleased that the configuration's field visit to the Central African Republic had borne results, including the engagement of the Government with the opposition. Improving transparency in governance, an important consideration for donors, should remain a priority. An accurate cost assessment of reintegration needs would also be useful as only estimates of the resources required had been provided thus far. The upcoming meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Central African Republic should offer the configuration an opportunity to report on recent events and resolve pending issues.

30. **Mr. Okafor** (Nigeria) said that while the Government's dialogue with the opposition and the ceasefire agreements between rebel groups were welcome developments, his delegation was concerned about the challenges to security sector reform, including the infiltration of foreign elements into the country. While his Government remained interested in renewing its cooperation with the Central African Republic, it also believed that the involvement of members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECOWAS) in developing a working strategy to ensure the security of the region would engender stability in the country. He thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support for her recommendations and stressed that leadership at all levels of government and transparency in governance were determining factors in achieving peace.

31. **Mr. Curran** (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the signing of the ceasefire agreement between rebel groups and called on the CPJP to sign the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement and participate in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. He urged the Government to finalize the reintegration strategy and called on the international community to assist with its implementation. The Government should work with the international community and BINUCA to ensure that the security sector reform strategy focused on developing a well-trained, ethnically balanced military force that respected human rights.

32. His delegation was concerned at recent IMF reports that public revenue management had been disrupted prior to the municipal elections. He called on the Government to take concrete steps to prevent and address the problem of corruption and mismanagement of funds, particularly during the electoral process.

33. With regard to the violence and instability generated by Chadian rebels, his Government remained committed to helping its partners in the African region, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance. A small number of United States military personnel had been deployed to LRA-affected areas in order to provide advice and assistance in the areas of information-sharing and coordination of operations. He commended the leadership of the Government of the Central African Republic in the effort to combat the LRA and stressed that as military pressure on the group increased, efforts should focus on facilitating the defection and escape of LRA combatants and abductees. Lastly, he emphasized the need to mobilize resources for the Central African Republic and the important role that the configuration played in that regard.

*The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.*